

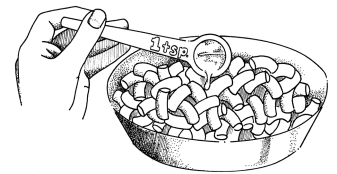
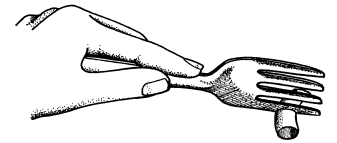
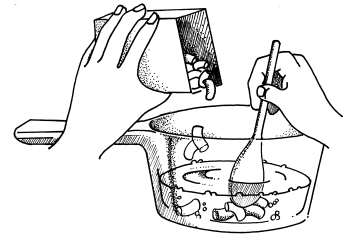
The Many Shapes of Pasta

Cooking Pasta

There is one basic way to cook pasta and many ways to use it. It can be cooked and served plain or added to a casserole, salad or soup.

The basic steps for cooking pasta are:

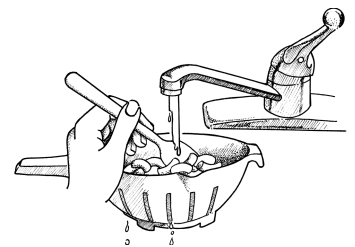
1. Bring water to boil in a large pot.
Use 4 quarts of water for each pound (4 cups) of pasta.
2. Salt does not have to be added. If salt is used, add 1 teaspoon per 4 quarts of water.
3. Add the pasta gradually; stir as pasta is added or stir once or twice after all the pasta has been added.
4. Do not cover the cooking pot.
5. To prevent pasta from sticking together, stir again after the water comes back to a boil and every few minutes.
6. Follow package directions for length of cooking time.
7. Pasta cooked too long will be too soft. To test pasta, cut with a fork or take a bite. The pasta is done when it still has a bit of uncooked core, or it is al-dente. Al-dente means “to the tooth” – tender, yet firm.
8. Drain in a colander. There is no need to rinse.
9. Add to a casserole or soup. If serving plain, add a little oil to keep the pasta from sticking together.



Cold Pasta for a Salad:

Cook as above, but cool it down before adding it to a salad.

1. Drain in a colander and rinse with cold water.
Stir to aid cooling.
2. Do not allow pasta to stand in water for any length of time, as it will continue to absorb water.
3. Once the pasta has cooled, drain and toss lightly with a teaspoon or so of salad or cooking oil. This will help keep the pasta pieces from sticking together and drying out.



Pasta Questions:

Q I cooked too much pasta; what can I do with it?
Can I cook pasta one day and use it the next?

A Cooking twice the amount of pasta you need is a great way to save cooking time. Cool your cooked pasta down, add a little salad or vegetable oil, put the pasta in a covered container and refrigerate or freeze for later use.

Q How do you reheat cold pasta?

A Restaurants precook pasta all the time. To reheat they simply dip in boiling water just long enough to heat the pasta through.
Or, reheat 1 cup of pasta in the microwave for 45 seconds.

Q When I bake a casserole, my pasta always gets too mushy.

A If a casserole will be in the oven for more than 30 minutes, undercook your pasta by about one-half. If the instructions on the box say to cook the pasta for 10 minutes, cook only for five or six minutes.

Q When I make soup with pasta in it, the pasta gets too mushy.

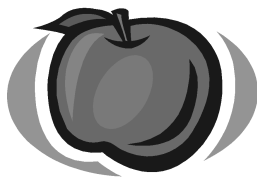
A Try one of two methods. Cook all the ingredients and add the dry pasta only for the last seven to 12 minutes of cooking time. Or, cook the pasta separately and add it the last few minutes, just to heat it through.

Q If I put cheese on the top of my casserole, it always burns.

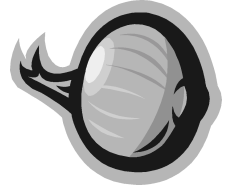
A Cheese mixed in a casserole doesn't burn, but if you sprinkle it on the top of a casserole, try one of two methods to prevent burning. Either cover your casserole or add the cheese for the last five minutes of baking. Cooking cheese on top of a casserole in a hot 400-degree oven may make the cheese separate and become tough.



North Dakota Department of Health
Division of Maternal and Child Health



QUICK TIPS



PASTA

Boxes of sandwich bags, rolls of tin foil, plastic wrap and the like can use up a lot of drawer space. Solve this problem by storing the boxes upright in the slots of a cardboard six-pack container in a cabinet under the counter.

Using pasta shapes with curves and twists will help keep your tomato sauce on your pasta.

To prevent your cutting board from slipping all the time, put a damp cloth under it.

Store-bought wonton wrappers make a great substitute for homemade pasta when making ravioli. Lay one wrapper on a work surface, place the filling on top, brush the edge with water, cover with another wrapper and use the tines of a fork to seal the edges.

Pasta Arithmetic:

1 pound of pasta (depending on the shape) = 4 cups of dry pasta

1 cup dry pasta = 2 cups cooked pasta

Add new life to an old rubber spatula by simply snipping off the damaged outer edge. You can usually do this twice before having to throw the spatula away.

Save the rubber band you get when you buy fresh broccoli to help open jars. Snapping one around the lid provides a better grip to open the jar quickly.

Use an egg slicer to slice not only hard-cooked eggs, but also kiwi, strawberries, bananas or mushrooms.

Use your imagination and turn leftovers into a special treat by creating your own casserole. Use the following portions to guide your imagination:

4 cups cooked pasta
1 pound meat
Spices to taste

2 cups of sauce
2-4 cups of vegetables

The Many Shapes of Pasta

Broccoli Tuna Pasta Toss: Just add a slice of fresh fruit, bread and milk to complete the meal.

5 ounces medium pasta shells
1 package (10 ounces) frozen broccoli cuts
1 can (10 ounces) cream of chicken soup
1 can (8 ounces) sliced water chestnut, drained
½ cup low fat sour cream or yogurt
½ cup (2 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
¼ teaspoon garlic powder (optional)
1 large can (9 ounces) tuna, drained

1. Prepare pasta according to package directions, adding frozen broccoli during the last 5 minutes of cooking time, drain well.
2. In a separate bowl, combine soup, water chestnuts, sour cream or yogurt, cheese, Worcestershire sauce and garlic powder. Stir to mix well.
3. Stir soup mixture into drained pasta and broccoli in a large saucepan.
4. Gently fold in tuna.
5. Cook over medium-low heat 5 minutes or until heated through; stirring a few times.

Bow Ties Con Carne: Hot cornbread and a glass of milk are great with a chili flavor.

16 ounces bowtie, rotini or other medium pasta
1 onion, diced
½ pound lean ground beef
1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
1 jar (8 ounces) taco sauce
1 cup canned kidney or pinto beans, rinsed and drained
1 teaspoon chili powder
Topping: 3 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
½ cup low-fat sour cream

1. Prepare pasta according to package directions, drain.
2. In a large saucepan, brown ground beef and onion. Stir in tomato sauce, taco sauce, beans and chili powder.
3. Bring to a boil and cook on low heat for 8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Toss hot pasta with a teaspoon of oil or a pat of butter and place on a serving platter. Top with ground beef mixture.
5. Pass shredded cheese and sour cream as a topping.

South of the Border Manicotti: Serve with cooked peas or for a south of the border taste, grilled peppers and onions.

8 ounces manicotti noodles
2 cans (10 ounces each) chili beef soup
1 ½ cups water
1 jar (8 ounces) taco sauce, divided
1 ½ pounds lean ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
4-ounces grated Parmesan cheese
1 can (16 ounces) refried beans
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese.

1. Cook pasta according to package directions, drain.
2. To make the sauce, puree in a blender or food processor the chili beef soup, water and ½ of the taco sauce.
3. Brown ground beef and onion; drain fat.
4. Add Parmesan cheese, refried beans and ½ of the taco sauce to the ground beef. Simmer 5 minutes.
5. Stuff manicotti noodles with meat mixture.
6. Spray a 9 x 13-inch pan with non-stick spray. Spread a thin layer of sauce, and arrange stuffed manicotti in a single layer. Cover with remaining sauce.
7. Bake 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Top with cheddar cheese. Cook for 10 minutes more.



The following two recipes are for those of you who love to cook. Both recipes look complicated because of the number of ingredients and the number of steps. But taken one step at a time, they are fairly easy.

Serve for a special day, with a salad, bread sticks, a glass of milk and a special dessert.

Quick and Easy Lasagna

6-7 lasagna noodles
½ pound lean ground beef
1 small onion, chopped
1/3 cup water
½ teaspoon basil
½ teaspoon oregano
14 or 16-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
1 egg
1 ¼ cups (10 ounces) cottage cheese
2 cups mozzarella cheese
¼ cup Parmesan cheese

1. In skillet, brown ground beef and onion, drain.
2. Add water, basil, oregano and spaghetti sauce.
3. Bring to a boil and simmer 10 minutes to blend flavors.
4. In a small bowl, beat together egg and cottage cheese.
5. In an 8 x 8 pan, spread ½ cup of meat mixture. Break noodles to fit pan, using about 2 ½ noodles on the bottom layer.
6. Spread 1/3 of meat mixture on top of noodles; add ½ of cottage cheese mixture and ½ cup mozzarella cheese.
7. Layer 2 ½ more noodles, ½ of the remaining meat mixture, the rest of the cottage cheese mixture and ½ cup mozzarella cheese.
8. Layer the rest of the noodles, the remaining meat mixture, remaining mozzarella cheese and the Parmesan cheese.
9. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.
10. Uncover and bake for an additional 30 minutes.
11. Let stand for 15-20 minutes before cutting
You can cut the cooking time in half by cooking the lasagna noodles. Proceed as above but eliminate the 1/3-cup water. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Let stand before cutting.



Pasta Dakota Style (Like Chicken Primavera)

- 4 whole boneless, skinless chicken breasts
(about 1 ½ pounds)
3 tablespoons soy sauce
4 cloves of minced garlic or garlic powder
1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger or ½
teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon sugar
3 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 slice chopped bacon
6 green onions, chopped
1 cup snow peas, fresh or frozen
1 bell pepper, thinly sliced
½ cup white wine or wine vinegar
1 17- ounce jar Alfredo pasta sauce
1 tablespoon margarine
14-16 ounces medium to long pasta like
fettuccini, linguine, rotelle or rotini.
1. Cut chicken breasts into 1-inch cubes and place in a resealable plastic bag.
 2. Combine soy sauce, garlic, sugar and lemon juice; pour over chicken. Marinate in the refrigerator at least 1 hour or overnight; drain chicken.
 3. In large skillet on medium heat, add oil and brown chicken. Remove chicken and set aside.
 4. In same skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until almost done. Add onion, snow peas and bell pepper, stirring occasionally 3 to 4 minutes or until onion is tender. Add vinegar or wine and cook for 1 minute. Stir in Alfredo pasta sauce.
 5. Return chicken to skillet and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes or until chicken is well cooked.
 6. Cook pasta according to package directions.
 7. Toss hot pasta with margarine. Place on platter, pour sauce over pasta.

Quick and Easy Casseroles

Serve the following casseroles with a salad, or vegetable, slice of bread and a glass of milk.

Ravioli Casserole (6 servings)

- 1 jar (28 ounces) spaghetti sauce
- 1 package (25 ounce) frozen cheese ravioli
- 2 cups (16 ounces) cottage cheese
- 4 cups (16 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees
2. Cook ravioli according to package direction and drain.
3. Spread ½ cup of spaghetti sauce in an ungreased 13 x 9-inch pan.
4. Layer half of the ravioli, 1 ¼ cup spaghetti sauce, 1 cup cottage cheese, and 2 cups mozzarella cheese.
5. Repeat layers.
6. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
7. Bake uncovered for 30-40 minutes or until bubble.
8. Let stand 5-10 minutes.

Pizza Mac Casserole (6 servings)

- 1 pound ground beef
- 2 cups uncooked elbow macaroni
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 2 jars (14 ounces each) pizza sauce
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In skillet, brown ground beef; drain.
3. Cook macaroni according to package directions and drain.
4. Combine, ground beef, cooked macaroni, onion, and pizza sauce.
5. Pour into a greased 2 ½ quart baking dish.
6. Cover and bake for 20 minutes.

7. Uncover and add shredded cheese.
8. Bake for 10-15 minutes longer or until cheese is melted

Overnight Tuna Casserole (4 servings)

- 1 can (10 ¾ ounces) cream of celery soup, undiluted
- 1 cup milk
- 1 can (6 ounces) tuna, drained
- 1 cup uncooked elbow macaroni
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese.

1. In a bowl, mix together milk and soup until smooth.
2. Add the tuna, macaroni, peas, and cheese; mix well.
3. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
4. Microwave the next day, covered, on high for 14-16 minutes or until bubbly.
5. Uncover; let stand for 5 minutes.

Minestrone Macaroni (6 servings)

- 1 pound ground beef
- 2 cans (14 ½ ounces each) Italian diced tomatoes. Do not drain.
- 2 ¼ cups water
- 1 ½ cups uncooked elbow macaroni
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 1 can (16 ounces) kidney beans
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans
- 1 can (14 ½ ounces cut green beans.

1. In a large skillet, brown the ground beef and drain.
2. Add tomatoes, water, macaroni and bouillon. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer for 12-15 minutes or until macaroni is done.
4. Rinse and drain all of the beans.
5. Add beans to macaroni mixture and mix together.
6. Cook in skillet until beans are heated through.